

The FCC has a responsibility to actively foster diverse coverage of local issues so the public is educated and able to participate in meaningful discussion and decision-making on those issues that most immediately affect them. Two concrete ways the Commission can do this are: 1) Do NOT allow companies to own more than one television station in any market. All waivers of this broadcast duopoly rule should be rescinded immediately. Restrictions against dual ownership must be strictly enforced in the interest of protecting against the consolidation of media ownership. 2) Set aside bandwidth and funding for the operation of non-commercial public service media in every local community. Left to the mercy of free market forces, media will naturally serve its owners by operating in the most cost-efficient way possible, creating demand in consumers and delivering them to advertisers. But since the media uses public rights of way, shouldn't it be required to serve, in part, democracy, and not just capitalism? Democracy requires a public that is educated and able to participate in debate and decision-making. If the FCC doesn't require media to serve this purpose, beginning at the local level and extending to the national level, then who else will step in to do this? If, as is the case in Hawaii now with a waiver of Emmis' ownership of 2 television stations, one crew is sent out to cover a story that is then packaged for air on 2 different television stations, what are the chances that the points of view presented will be diverse? What occurs usually is the story is presented the same way twice. While the FCC can't raise the level of journalism in any market, the Commission can at least create and enforce rules that foster the chance of having more diversity of coverage in the media.